

NUTRITION

Fruits and Vegetables: Wash them up!

Eating fresh fruits and vegetables goes hand-in-hand with living a healthy lifestyle. The current recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid are to eat at least five servings of fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables each day. In the interest of food safety, you may wonder why pesticides and food-grade waxes are used on produce or how to keep your produce clean and food safe.

Pesticides are an essential component in the production of a plentiful and safe food supply. Treating crops with safe levels of pesticides helps ensure that the produce we are accustomed to is available when we go to the store. Our food supply is not only the safest, but it is the most abundant in the world and pesticides are one of the important tools that have made that abundance possible.

Food-grade wax is used to protect produce and make it more visually appealing. Edible wax helps protect fresh fruits and vegetables from moisture as well as preserve them, making them available to use year round. Although food-grade wax is not harmful, it is still important to wash the produce.

How to keep your produce clean and food-safe?

1. Wash produce in water or use a produce wash. Use a scrub brush. Rinse thoroughly.
2. Discard the outer leaves of leafy vegetables such as lettuce and cabbage.
3. Scrub the outside of melons with water or a produce wash product before cutting rinds. Rinse thoroughly.
4. Although it is not necessary to peel waxed produce, you may choose to peel it or use a produce wash.
5. Cut vegetables on a clean cutting board or surface, not one that was just used for raw meat. Be sure to use a clean knife, too.
6. Store produce on a shelf or drawer above raw meat in the refrigerator. If you don't the raw meat juices may drip on them and cause contamination.
7. Keep your refrigerator produce drawer clean and sanitized.

